A Chest of Stories

Francisco C. Xavier

Cornélio Pires

Part One

A CHEST OF STORIES

———————————————

A MEETING OF FRIENDS

Emmanuel

Dear Reader,

This book requires no formal presentation.
It will suffice to say:

— *"Cornélio receives his friends."*

Let us imagine ourselves in a hall of fraternal gatherings, where the host welcomes us with affection, intent on entertaining us while also instructing us.

This image is perfectly suited to the present volume.

Cornélio Pires, our brother and companion, here offers us his experiences and observations, his notes and cautions, translated into lessons, sometimes smiling, yet always touched by realism and spiritual elevation.

Let us listen to the messenger, reading his themes and responses, and let us learn with him to observe constructively, giving thanks to God for the opportunity to know and to reflect with confidence upon the teachings of life, so that we may learn ever better how to live — and how to serve.

Book "A Chest of Stories" - Psychography by Francisco C. Xavier –

Spirit Cornélio Pires

A PRECIOUS SERVANT

Cornélio Pires

———

In reply to your letter sent,
Dear Elmano, hear me say:
Money is Heaven's helping hand,
Placed in human progress' way.

*

Never curse the coin itself;
When well guided, finance stands
As a blessing to all labor
And a hope where need demands.

*

To reveal how money serves
When its purpose is made clear,
I now bring you, in this letter,
One small lesson, simple, dear.

*

Calimério took the street,
With a companion close behind,
One he'd won through helping hands
In a carpenter's humble home they'd find.

*

The brother I talk about to you
Walked ahead as faithful guide;
The other stood as willing help,
Heard, complied, and walked beside.

He was truly such a friend
As the finest one can be,
When a soul sincerely seeks
To live life in charity.

*

Soon I saw the lovely scene
That between the two took form:
Where they passed along in service,
Light appeared, serene and warm.

*

Both brought timely aid
To Zulmira Noé's pain;
Once she doubted, sick at heart,
Now her faith was born again.

*

They arranged a proper bed,
Full of comfort, firm and sound,
For old Regozino, who
Had collapsed upon the ground.

*

They brought warmer clothes as well
To Agenor's lonely room,
That forsaken, ailing soul
Who had begged for a blanket's bloom.

*

They saw bright joy at once arise
In Albernaz's widow's eyes,
To whom they gladly gave that day
A generous tank of cooking gas.

*

To Angelina's humble shed,
Widow of Zé França, they sped,
Bringing penicillin fair,
Saving a child with tender care.

*

To Lília da Conceição's retreat,
A widow's quiet, modest seat,
They filled the table, rich and plain,
With milk and sugar, bread and grain.

*

And so, the feast went on that way
Throughout the remainder of the day:
Wherever that devoted pair appeared,
New hope was born, and fear disappeared.

*

United in the work of good,
They recalled the Cyreneans stood;
In reverent silence they were viewed
By God's own messengers, understood.

*

Now I shall tell you, clear and sure,
Who was that servant kind and pure,
Who gave such help, so freely shared,
At that great feast of love prepared.

*

The friend who walked with Calimério,
Answering needs with heart sincere,
Bears this blessed, honored name:
— "Charity's Money," known by fame.

SOULS WITHOUT FAITH

———

In a letter, you ask me,
My dear Antônio Peri,
In what manner faithless souls
Are used to living here.

*

You speak of "souls without faith,"
And the way you define their way
Makes us pause and think a bit
On life just as it is today.

*

To you I may now affirm,
From all that I've come to see:
Each one, after leaving Earth,
Seeks the place where they shall be.

*

Those who strive to rise each day
In the field of honest toil
Live in the beyond by faith and work
That once shaped their earthly soil.

*

But those who wander through the land,
With no belief to guide their way,
On Earth or far beyond this ground,
They live the thoughts they choose each day.

*

In such cases, death alone
Opens no transforming door:
An unbalanced mind goes on
Hallucinating as before.

*

Whoever lived just for himself
Walks a road that's bent and wrong,
And there are so many like that
I stand amazed the whole day long.

*

Do you recall João Panca,
From the farm by the old wall?
He passed on wrapped in laziness,
Still tangled in his hammock after all.

*

A gold miner through and through,
Manoelino, Nhá Chica's kin,
Bodiless, he haunts the hills,
Still digging mica deep within.

*

Altino, from Isla Bela,
Thought of food both night and day—
In the Afterlife, he shaped within
The image of a pot of clay.

*

A drinker like no other,
Our Anselmo Hostein
Died long ago—and yet
He still lives inside a glass of wine.

*

Dona Rita loved her gold,
Stood forever where it shone;
Ten months dead and bodiless,
The poor soul won't believe she's gone.

*

A conqueror, Nico died;
Now, whenever he appears,
He attacks as if a ghost,
And the young girls run in fear.

*

So eager was her self-admiration,
Esmeralda Botelho's fascination,
Freed from flesh but chained by pride,
She stays before the mirror, fixed and wide.

*

With no effort made to rise or grow,
Just as plainly seen around,
So many drift along in life,
With no clear why or how to be found.

*

A life without an ideal
Is a road the wrong way through:
Danger, hardship, trouble all,
With no direction guiding you.

*

Use the vehicle of your body
Serving, loving, walking straight;
Those who act and trust in God
Never need reverse—no backward gear of fate.

*

THE TROUBLE WITH COMPLAINING

———

I have received your letter,
Dear Raimundo Seixas, friend;
You ask my honest opinion
On complaints that never end.

*

Without detours on the matter,
I can state, my brother dear:
Nearly every constant complaint
Is worn-out talk we need not hear.

*

We cry aloud, we grumble on,
Though the truth is plainly known:
Lament without honest labor
Is wasted breath and time thrown.

*

To every soul is given still
A task that calls for honest care;
We are the servants life employs,
Each one bound to a duty fair.

*

When the spirit grows rebellious
At the slightest task or load,
It leans at once toward easy flight,
And bitter speech becomes its road.

*

One complains of time and weather
Anywhere the person goes,
Blaming dust and stone and wind,
Heat and cold—whichever blows.

*

Yet in all this habit of whining,
One clear truth you may record:
Those who walk the road complaining
Soon grow worse along the road.

*

Duty is a load from Heaven,
And whoever treats it light
Meets a firm and living law
That makes the burden twice as tight.

*

God, it seems, grants each of us
A cross of gifts we're meant to bear;
Fleeing it, we only find
The heavier crosses we deserve, elsewhere.

*

Do you recall young Alexandre,
Cursing bosses night and day?
Soon he found himself without work
For five hundred days in gray.

*

Weeping over four small coins,
Antonico Brotas fled;
Soon a raging flood rushed in
And swept away his bed of bills instead.

*

Lamenting a ring she'd lost one day,
Hot-tempered Dona Rosenda fumed away;
Bearing a candle, carelessly led,
She set the farm in flames instead.

*

Complaining of his loyal wife,
Laurindo de Belém,
In angry haste threw his cash
Upon Saint John's bonfire flame.

*

Mad at rain that would not cease,
Dona Liquinha ran in rage,
Slipped and fell from lofty height,
Four meters sealed that page.

*

From the lessons I have seen,
Dear brother, this is clear to me:
Whoever clings to constant complaint
Loses command of self completely.

*

After leaving flesh behind,
How many souls at last can see
They wasted precious time in life
Through useless anger endlessly.

*

Mark this lesson in yourself,
In yourself and all you meet:
In the life of those who complain,
Life itself turns more defeat.

*

If you wish for happiness
On Earth and in the Life Beyond,
Work, walk on, and do good,
Never blaming anyone.

*

EDUCATION AND LIFE

———

"What can a spirit, freed from flesh,
Teach us of education's art?"
That is the question you have sent,
My dear friend Viamão, from the heart.

*

Education — ancient theme —
Studied by duty, line by line;
So easy spoken, plainly said,
So hard to grasp in depth and sign.

*

The Earth is but a mighty school,
Where good outgrows and silences wrong;
I see it clearly now, at last,
From Spirit Life, where truths belong.

*

Why time on Earth, from past to future?
Why birth and death, the endless flow?
If not to learn, refine the spirit,
And harvest what we come to sow?

*

One gains the cradle as a start
To conquer goodness, step by step;
If learning, working, serving all,
One journeys on, with progress kept.

*

The spirit, anywhere it stands,
Can do whatever it believes;
But once it walks the Earth in flesh,
That's when the struggle truly heaves.

*

Rare is the soul in human form
That calmly accepts what must be faced;
Most, among men, in silent fear,
Fear suffering before it's placed.

*

And fearing harm or wounded pride,
It seeks escape or clever guise,
Refusing still the precious chance
To educate — and self-educate — the wise.

*

Only now, long after death,
With time itself to make things clear,
Do I understand the tragic ends
Of cases shared by us both, dear.

*

Tim was reborn with grave demands,
To gain the rule of discipline;
His body harmed in vital parts,
He took morphine to end his pain.

*

Tânia asked for trials at home,
That she might learn the art of love.

Bound to a husband worn by illness,
She fled the house she dreamed thereof.

*

Longing to master true forgiveness,
Tomé begged life for one more chance;
Finding parents firm and strict,
He slid into the grip of drink and trance.

*

Seeking patience and resignation,
Our Alarico Machado tried;
Confined in want and bitter need,
He rebelled and took his life.

*

To leave old passions far behind,
Gil was born of Dona Bardana;
Later, torn by inner strife,
He lost himself in marijuana.

*

Tônio, longing for a deeper faith,
Asked Earth for trial, for strife, for test.
He spoke of God with fervent tongue,
Yet raised a club in violent zest.

*

She begged for a mission meant to teach,
Dona Jurana Junquilhos bold.
Yet pruned the pepper plants with care,
While scorning children she should hold.

*

To help the loved ones of his heart,
Noé was born in Água Corrente;
Today, as **a** *father, home receives*
Only grief, loud shouts, and violent temper.

*

That's how it is... To educate
Is service greater than all service shown;
Yet how demanding it becomes
To honor vows we call our own!

*

For me, this blessing, taken true,
Is God's own light that longs to stay;
But still, to reach it as it is,
I have long centuries to walk my way.

*

TRIALS AND CALAMITIES

———

You ask us, in a thoughtful note,
My dear Alfeu Segismundo, friend,
How joy may still be found on Earth
When trials seem to have no end.

*

And further on, you write to say:
"Cornélio, what is your reply?
So many tears across the world,
I cannot grasp the reason why...

*

One needs but read, or hear, or see
The news that floods us every day,
And suffering weighs upon the mind
At tribulations on display.

*

Wars that never seem to cease,
Despair that spreads from land to land,
Unsteady climates, disasters vast,
Calamities on every hand...

*

Torrential rains and killing frost,
Drought and tides that surge and sweep.
Fear and anguish swell and spread
Where faith grows dim and hope won't keep.

*

Disaster strikes at every hour,
Blind force descends in brutal might...
How can one still be truly glad
Amid so much unending fight?

*

Torrential rains and killing frost,
Drought and tides that surge and sweep.
Fear and anguish swell and spread
Where faith grows dim and hope won't keep.

*

Yet still I say, my dearest friend,
The Earth has always been this way:
A school that never fails to teach
Both you and me, day after day.

*

You know it well: this training ground
Where we are shaped and made anew
Demands from us both work and toil,
With discipline and trials too.

*

But if you truly long for joy,
Reflect, dear Alfeu, calmly so,
Upon the blessings that life has given,
So many gifts you already know.

*

Think of the souls who guided you
And placed your steps upon the right,
The means that guard and shelter you,
The friendships warming day and night.

*

**Observe the power you possess*
To seek the paths that please your will;
You move, you choose, you shape your way
According to your purpose still.

*

Recall the rest that sleep provides,
The table spread to bring you cheer,
The flowing water in your home,
The daily bread that comes so near.

*

Remember shadows chased away
By gifts of light when lamps are lit,
The tools of progress at your reach,
The blessings of nature, bit by bit.

*

Reflect on animals that toil
And suffer through the passing days,
So that your plate may be there to you
As nourishment — and thankful praise.

*

Recall the calm and peaceful hours
Of study, prayer, and quiet rest,
The moments wholly yours alone,
When no one comes your peace to test.

*

And then you'll see, with sharpened sight
And prompt attention, keen and clear,
Earth's joys are not few at all,
But countless ones, both far and here.

*

In short, my friend, the truth I see:
On Earth, our pain would shrink away
If we but learned, in simple acts,
To thank for life from day to day.

*

If you would grow within the light
That God, in mercy, lets us see,
Forget empty talk and idle plaints,
Drop all complaint — and walk ahead, be free.

*

PURSUIT

———

"Why would Jesus have advised,
In teachings meant to save,
That we should pray with earnest hearts
For those who persecute and brave?"

*

Condensing all your thoughtful lines,
My dear friend Lucas Ferraz,
Here comes the question, clear and sure,
The heart of all your doubts, alas.

*

When closely weighed in essence pure,
The matter speaks outright:
The simple teaching, strong and clear,
Already brings its light.

*

Whoever persecutes or harms,
Wherever they may be on the way,
Is quietly contracting debts
They someday must repay.

*

If one who's persecuted stays
In peace, forgiving all offense,
The trial suffered on this way
Becomes a step of recompense.

*

Now, after death, from what I know,
Beyond the flesh, beyond the grave,
So many bitter scenes appear
Confirming laws no soul can waive.

*

Janjão seized Nhô Chico's land,
The Cancela Farm entire;
He soon passed on — and now remains
Clung to it in dire fire.

*

Lelé, pursuing poor old Juca,
Set a trap with cruel intent;
But not his foe — his own dear brother
Was the one left broken, bent.

*

Totó hounded Joana night and day,
Swearing love to mask his sway;
Beyond the grave, the poor man's role
Is marked as tormentor of the soul.

*

Antão, to wed fair Dina's hand,
Had Gil do Estalo slain;
But Gil returned as Antão's son
And now is his daily pain.

*

Antônia ruined Jonas' life
To marry Rodrigo dear;
He was reborn between them both,
Collecting debts severe.

*

Nhô Chico grabbed land everywhere,
Winning lawsuits with ease;
Disembodied now, he haunts a cave
On that same farm with no peace.

*

So, see the lesson, plain and just:
To live upright is law;
Far better suffer wrong in life
Than be the one who claws.

*

The one who bears patiently a pursuit
Keeps rising, step by step;
Who persecutes just suffers on —
How long? No one can guess.

*

NEWS FROM THE SHADOW

———

Dear Marta Eliana,
You ask me to explain to you
How, from Beyond this world,
The paths of intrigue come into view.

*

Your thoughtful letter, dear friend,
Is difficult terrain to tread;
I scarcely know how to reply—
Forgive me, Marta, as I've said.

*

I liken intrigue to a shadow,
That troubles any life it finds,
Settling deep within the heart
That opens doors within the mind.

*

To grasp its force, so dark and strange,
Its venom subtle, slow, and vast,
I once walked close beside its trail,
Along the paths where it has passed.

*

I saw it whispering in hush
With Zeferina, known full well;
And after only a few brief days,
The poor soul's reason broke and fell.

*

Another door then opened wide,
Gino Delgado's home that day;
After he heard the shadow speak,
He turned on kin and fired away.

*

Soon after, it conversed as well
With Dona Flora Bonilha fair;
Unhinged at heart, the wretched woman
Beat her daughter in despair.

*

It seized the thoughts of Juca next,
Concerning João Libório, his son;
Some days went by—the father broke,
And to the sanatorium was gone.

*

It entered Zeca's modest shop,
Defaming Elísio Coutinho's name;
Next day, in fury uncontrolled,
Zeca attacked his neighbor, aflame.

*

Observe the turmoil that arises
Wherever shadows gain their ground—
Most of all within the homes
Where faith and prayer are often found.

*

A model Spiritist Center
Was Sister Rosa's blessed place;
Once it welcomed in the shade,
Confusion spread with rapid pace.

*

One day it slipped, unnoticed,
Into the Institute of Prayer;
In little time, the Institute
Collapsed in conflict and despair.

*

A group devoted to pure charity
Was led by Sister Genoveva bright;
They embraced the shadow unaware—
Soon found themselves in deepened night.

*

Be vigilant... Whoever shelters
Intrigue, no matter where they stand,
Falls ill without perceiving
The harmful grip upon the land.

*

Do not be afraid—you surely know:
Wherever shadows choose to stay,
Conversation strays at once
From goodness' firm and rightful way.

*

And lastly, I recall the words
Of old Cirino Horta's lore:
"When intrigue comes knocking in,
Hear nothing—and then bar the door."

*

THE TWO SIDES

———

I received your letter now,
My dear Antônio Tonei,
On an old and thoughtful question
In the realm of living faith.

*

You say:
"Dear Cornélio, listen—
Why does it so often seem
That so many choose to live
On the farther, darker team?

*

On this side, here, we hold
Hope, peace and guiding light,
Work that lifts us, step by step,
In the credits earned through Christ.

*

Yet it hurts the heart to see,
When we stop to think and know,
How many friends we cherish
Lost in disbelief and woe."

*

The line you draw, in truth,
Could not be clearer, I say:
You divide our faithful side
From that other side away.

Yet my answer, dear friend,
Is the same as yours, I see:
Unhappy is the one who doubts
Life's eternal continuity.

*

Quarrels may arise at times,
Complaint and bitterness too,
But amid the fiercest tempests
Faith still stands firm and true.

*

On our side, now and then,
Trials strike the heart outright,
Still belief dissolves the weight
Of every trouble in our sight.

*

Some are set apart from others,
Though the good denies it not,
For not all are pledged to labor
Under one shared, sacred lot.

*

Before those who wish to serve them,
They remain forever tense;
They seek no virtues in their peers,
Only flaws they can offense.

*

Most often they are people caught
In this odd and troubled plight:
Heads overflowing with ideas,
Yet lives left hollow, dry of light.

*

On this side, nonetheless,
There may be intrigue and strain,
Mud and storms along the road—
Still the traveler moves again.

*

On that side, my dear friend,
Lurks much shadow, tightly sealed,
And many souls are found in tears,
With no faith in life revealed.

*

Those brothers dwelling over there—
Here's where my thoughts collide—
They wish to find themselves some faith
But refuse the work required.

*

They hunt for signs and revelations,
Grand marvels stunning the sight.
They want the truth made fixed and certain,
Find it once — and ask for more outright.

*

So, we see, on every side,
Many trials yet to endure;
Self-refinement asks for duty,
Each in place, steadfast and sure.

*

Therefore, dear and trusted friend,
In the faith that walks and serves,
Let us stay upon our side,
True to work it deserves.

*

Let us beseech our God above,
Whose sustaining care is moved by love;
Strong help remain upon our band,
And peace be granted to that farther land.

*